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Published in:
Innovation. The European Journal for Social Science Research

DOI:
10.1080/13511610.2015.1128808

Publication date:
2016

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research

ISSN: 1351-1610 (Print) 1469-8412 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ciej20

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To cite this article: Frank Hendriks & Merlijn van Hulst (2016) Shifting repertoires: understanding cultural plurality in policing, Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 29:2, 161-176, DOI: 10.1080/13511610.2015.1128808

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2015.1128808

Published online: 06 Feb 2016.

Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 2016
Vol. 29, No. 2, 161–176, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2015.1128808

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Shifting repertoires: understanding cultural plurality in policing

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(*Received 20 July 2015; final version received 3 December 2015*)

The police is one of the most prominent organizations in the frontline of public administration. In order to deal with high external expectations, the organization has been said to develop and nurture multiple police cultures. Applying Grid Group Cultural Theory, or GGCT, we address the following questions: what sets of values, beliefs and practices has the police organization developed to deal with high expectations stemming from their publics? How do cultural tensions play out in real-life practices of policing "under pressure"? We find that cultural patterns described in the general literature on policing can be plotted on the GGCT map. Zooming in on the case of policing in the Netherlands, cultural plurality appears to be not only prominent in the police organization as such, but can also be found in the form of continuous cultural "tap-dancing" – swift, flexible and improvisational shifting – at various levels of active policing.

Keywords: Grid Group Cultural Theory; street-level bureaucracy; police organization; hybrid repertoires; cultural plurality; organizational shifting

How cultural tensions play out in policing

Increasingly, social science seems to become interested in the police organization (Fleming 2008; Needham 2009; Glaser and Denhardt 2010; Lacey et al. 2012; Andrews and Miller 2013; Morrell and Currie 2015). The interest is understandable, as the police is one of the state's most prominent public organizations, operating in the frontline of public administration (Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). Asked to intervene in all kinds of difficult situations and having been granted the monopoly of violence in times of peace, expectations of the police are high. At times and in some situations, the police even are asked to do "the impossible" (Morrell and Currie 2015). This has made many wonder about the way police officers look at their world and the practices they have developed to cope with the pressures they are under, that is, the police culture.

A fair deal of research has focused on police culture (Chan 1997; Reiner 2010; Cockcroft 2013). Reiner (2010), Foster (2003) and others (e.g. Sklansky 2007) have suggested that police culture is not monolithic – it would be better to talk about police cultures. The reason for this is that beliefs, values and practices are found to differ from one police setting to the next (Wilson 1968; Cain 1973). Researchers have also found significant differences at the individual level (Muir 1977; Reiner 2010), usually referred to as "policing styles". Police culture, thus, turns out to be differentiated or even fragmented (compare

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Martin 1992, on organizational cultures). This manifests itself in policemen's daily work practices and results in tensions within the organization, in particular between management and rank and file (Lipsky 1980; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni 1983). Recently, however, Loftus (2010) found that some of the basic aspects of police culture found in the 1960s (Skolnick [1966] 1967) still matter today. Police culture may have altered; it seems to have also retained some basic features. The reason for this would be that police officers simply have to work under similar conditions (constant potential danger, coupled to the need to act efficient and with authority), and that officers are not very eager to change their thinking and practices.

The literature on police cultures then tells a complex story about core elements of the police function and experience, which go hand in hand with subcultures based on diversity between groups, areas and individuals, and slow change over time (see also, Chan 1997). Empirical studies of police culture, however, tend to focus on specific aspects of the culture and an integrated framework would be useful (Loyens and Maesschalck 2014). We expect that Grid Group Cultural Theory, or GGCT, will allow us to see more of police culture(s). GGCT claims that there are a few basic ways of life that people in organizations use to look at their world and act in it. Initially developed by the anthropologist Douglas (1970, 1978, 1992, 1996), it has been used frequently in studies of public policy and administration to describe and explain the existence of various sets of values and beliefs in the public domain (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990; Coyle and Ellis 1994; Hood 1998; Perri 6 2003; Maesschalck 2004; Verweij and Thompson, 2006; Swedlow 2011; Lodge and Wegrich 2011; Hendriks 2010).

Cultural shifting when the heat is on

Through time, police beliefs, values and practices have been shaped at various levels of the organization – from the police organization as a whole (macro), through the level of department and teams (meso), to the officers dealing with concrete situations on a daily basis at the street level (micro). The question that is hard to answer on the basis of the existing literature, however, is how police cultures – in plural and in contradistinction – manifest themselves simultaneously at various levels and how possible tensions play out in culturally demanding situations, that is, situations in which police officers have to respond to conflicting cultural demands. With the help of GGCT, we therefore ask the following questions: what sets of values, beliefs and practices (cultures) has the police organization developed to deal with high expectations of their publics (macro)? How do cultural tensions play out in culturally demanding real-life situations of policing (meso and micro)?

Our first contribution is to understanding cultural plurality and contradistinction in one of the most fundamental institutions of the state: the police. Although our findings in first instance are telling about the case of Dutch policing and demanding situations therein, we believe that they are of relevance elsewhere. First, policing has a different character throughout the globe and change through time. For instance, the police in Belgium (Loyens and Maesschalck 2014) or in the Netherlands in the 1970s (Punch 1979) is not the same as in the Netherlands in present day. Still, some of its characteristic are shared and even enduring (cf. Loftus 2010). And, even though that does not mean that situations and cultural responses are the same, this makes it possible for reader to transfer findings and decide to what degree they have value elsewhere (Guba and Lincoln 1982). In addition, policing in general is not an anomaly. Just as the culture of policing is multiple, so can we expect various beliefs, values and practices simultaneously at work in hospitals, schools and other organizations in the frontline of public service (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). The urgent nature and the variety of the situations police officers have to deal with, however, make the police a

prime example of what it takes for public organizations to be able to master a pluriform repertoire of beliefs, values and practices. In the words of Egon Bittner, the police typically provides "a solution to an unknown problem arrived at by unknown means" (Bittner 1967, 701). In addition, even if regular police work can be mundane or even outright boring (Holdaway 1983), in demanding situations, police officers often have to deal with issues in a relatively short time span and with very limited information about the nature of the situation. The work of police officers then offers us the opportunity to study the use of values, beliefs and practices under pressure – *when the heat is on* (compare, Morrell and Currie 2015). Police work in demanding situations, like the work of other fast responders (Faraj and Xiao 2006), represents a relatively "extreme case" (Flyvbjerg 2001) that allows us to learn about the ultimate art and difficulties in balancing values, beliefs and practices. We expect that although the shapes that police cultures take have been described as relatively stable patterns on a more generic level (Loftus 2010), similar cultural variation might indeed be found at every level and that officers "in action" typically switch between cultural repertoires – sets of beliefs, values and practices – in particular situations (Swidler 1986). That then also marks our contribution to the debate on cultural pluriformity or coexistence in GGCT.

In what follows, we will increasingly "zoom in" on actual, frontline practices (Nicolini 2012; cf. Loyens 2013). In the next section, we outline GGCT and present a general overview of findings in the study of police culture. Next, we discuss the generic case of policing in the Netherlands, after which we move to particular policing practices on the ground. Our step-by-step procedure will replicate itself in the embedded case studies, as we have selected cases with a different organizational scope. In this way, we shift between generic and specific, between macro- and meso/micro-level cultural dynamics. We end our paper with a general discussion and concluding thoughts.

Applying GGCT to policing

Cultural differentiation, coexistence and balance-shifting

As it is widely known and used in studies of politics and administration (already in 2004, this journal published a special issue on the theory, vol. 17, no. 4), we will not delve deeply into the history of GGCT (see Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990; Coyle and Ellis 1994; Hood 1998; Perri 6 2004; Verweij and Thompson 2006; Swedlow 2011; Lodge and Wegrich 2011; Hendriks 1999). Instead, we will focus on three elements most relevant to our present purposes: the grid-group typology as a heuristic tool differentiating between basic cultural ideal types; the general idea of cultural coexistence; and the connected notion of balance-shifting – a process of moving back and forth, likened to "dancing" – within the cultural spectrum.

The grid-group typology distinguishes four basic types of partaking in social life: hierarchy, individualism, enclavism and atomism.[1] The four are theoretical ideal types; they relate to empirical cultural manifestations as primary colours do to real-world colour varieties. The ideal types result from the juxtaposition of two dimensions of sociality. The *group* dimension denotes the degree to which people's thoughts and actions are driven by their engagement in a social group. In the ideal-typical *low-group* culture or "me-culture", the individual operates as an autonomous agent in its own right. In the ideal-typical *high-group* culture or "we-culture", individuals are defined by the group that they have strong solidarity with and commitment to. The *grid* dimension refers to the extent to which people's thoughts and actions are prescribed by differentiating role prescriptions that externally define how different people are supposed to act in specific

situations and positions. The ideal-typical *low-grid* culture is one of "roles achieved": individual agents decide about the script that they play out and are free and equal in doing so. The ideal-typical *high-grid* culture is one of "roles ascribed": roles are allocated from the outside and are strongly specifying and guiding for people in particular social positions (Douglas 1982; Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990; Verweij and Thompson 2006).

If you connect the two bipolar dimensions you get, in the words of Douglas (2003, 3): "four opposed and incompatible types of social control, and plenty of scope for mixing, modifying or shifting in between the extremes". The ideal types of individualism, hierarchy, enclavism and atomism come with diverging normative preferences and competing beliefs about (human) nature (see Table 1). The ideal-typical culture is a combination of mutually interdependent and reinforcing institutions and values. Institutions generate values, which in turn legitimize institutions. Asking which come first – institutions or values – is viewed as a non-starter (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990, 21). In principle, each of the four cultures is geared at institutionalizing itself and de-institutionalizing its cultural competitors. In practice, different types of culture need to coexist in one way or another, sometimes with one or two cultural types predominant, sometimes in a more equal mixture (Douglas 2003; Thompson 2008).

Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990) already stressed that viable organizations, both small-scale and large-scale, require cultural variety and interaction. According to them, none of the four main cultures could be structurally excluded. Organizational viability was thought to be contingent on the interplay between different cultures, as each way of seeing implies also a way of not-seeing, and cultural blindness of one type needs cultural bias of another type for compensation. An individualistic culture, for instance, may be good at seeing the quick wins of new technology, but, for longer term warnings, it could benefit from the social sensitivities of enclavism and hierarchy. More recently, Perri 6 (2003) distinguished different types of cultural coexistence or "settlement" – demarcation, switching, exchange, confluence – in a theoretical fashion. Verweij (2011) stressed the importance of culturally pluralistic "clumsy solutions" for a complex world.

To understand why multiple values and beliefs are needed for organizations in action, however, we need to zoom in on organizational practices. Here, we will pick up on Hood's metaphorical concept of cultural "step-dancing" (1998, 211), which entails "the ability to shift the balance among a set of ambitious positions no one of which can be sustained for long". Hood (1998) uses this notion of step-dancing to emphasize the balancing skills that public managers need to possess, and public organizations need to cherish and

Table 1. Types of culture.

	Low group (me culture)	High group (we culture)
High grid (roles ascribed)	Atomism (isolate culture) Preference: avoidance Man: untrustworthy Nature: capricious	Hierarchy (positional culture) Preference: ordered integration Man: flawed but redeemable Nature: perverse/tolerant
Low grid (roles achieved)	Individualism (entrepreneurial culture) Preference: freedom of choice; level playing field Man: incorrigibly self-seeking Nature: benign	Enclavism (egalitarian culture) Preference: harmonious belonging; equal distribution Man: caring and sharing Nature: ephemeral

institutionalize. With the step-dancing metaphor, he underscores the necessity of cultural pluriformity and flexibility in public management. Step-dancing is primarily a way to deal with competing beliefs and values. Managers should be able to build up a cultural repertoire and effectively use those value-coupled practices that apply to specific situations.

Others have used different, but similar metaphors to highlight the way organizations deal with conflicting demands and value conflicts. Reflecting on routines, Feldman and Rafaeli (2002) introduced the metaphor of ballroom dancing, claiming that in the use of organizational routines, it is necessary to be both stable (perform certain pre-scripted moves) *and* flexible (adapting to unpredictable changes of the ballroom context). When it comes to value conflicts (Thacher and Rein 2004), organizations might, for instance, choose to focus on the value(s) that they feel primarily responsible for, "fire-walling" themselves from other demands, a strategy which in principle could also be used when different departments within an organization are in charge of sustaining different values. Through time, public organizations might also try to "cycle" between emphasizing one value to emphasizing another or they might decide what values to honour in which way on the basis of previous cases dealt with. The central question in this paper is how different cultural repertoires are mobilized and combined when police officers find themself in demanding situations.

Police cultures in theory

The literature on police culture is extensive (Loftus 2010; Reiner 2010; Cockcroft 2013). Up until the 1960s, in democratic societies, the police were generally seen as the organization meant to uphold the law. Early studies of policing showed that officers liked to see themselves as crime-fighters chasing bad guys and defending society against evil. The constant threat of danger coupled to the suspicion of members of the public, alienated officers from the public (Skolnick [1966] 1967). The public became "them".

The reality of police officers, others researchers found, was not one of dangerous pursuits and heroic arrests. To cope with the everyday demands, officers were often busy just "keeping the peace" and helping citizens with all kinds of problems (Bittner 1967). In the words of a rookie, Van Maanen (1973, 411) interviewed in the early 1970s:

> There is sure more to this job than I first thought. They expect us to be dog catchers, lawyers, marriage counsellors, boxers, firemen, doctors, baby-sitters, race-car drivers, and still catch a crook occasionally. There's no way we can do all that crap. They're nuts!

"Calling the cops" turns a situation into a problem, even if the cops attending the call might find it a waste of their time (Bittner 1974). This gave rise to the idea of the professional police officer, one who is responsive to the demands of the public (Wilson 1968; Muir 1977).

Later on, variations in police culture became a central focus of research (Cockcroft 2013). Wilson (1968) had already shown how police departments on the basis of environmental demands and managerial preferences developed their particular style. He saw that some departments used a watchmen style, which meant that the police did not intervene too much in public life, a legalistic style (which meant the police enforced the law in a quite strict manner) or service style (which meant the public – community – was to be served). Differences in police culture were also found between countries and between urban and rural areas (Cain 1973). Furthermore, looking at the internal organization, Reuss-Ianni

and Ianni (1983) claimed that there are two cultures within the police organization: that of the officers on the streets ("street cops") and that of their managers ("management cops"). Street cops, among themselves, would have an enclave view of their organization, but the management cops would try to control their street-level practices.

In response to the realities of the street, the public demands and office politics, officers typically choose those practices they think will fit with the work as they encounter, experience and value it and not just with what their superiors, the law or the public tell them to do (Skolnick [1966] 1967; Bittner 1967). Van Maanen (1974) also found that the rank-and-file officers developed a set of informal rules or stances that guide an important part of their practices on the street and in the organization: staying-out-of-trouble, don't expect much, lay-low-and-don't-make-waves and cover-your-ass. The shared character of such informal rules fits the enclave culture, but their content adds an isolate perspective on policing.

A separate strand of research, implicitly reflecting the difficulties in steering rank-and-file officers working in emergency relief (Lipsky 1980), highlights variation of "styles of policing" among individual officers. Interestingly enough, four different styles are typically found (Reiner 2010). These styles seem quite compatible with GGCT. Muir's (1977) four types, for instance, included the enforcer whose directive style reminds us of hierarchy; the avoider whose tragic style relates to atomism; the professional, whose personalized style resembles individualism; and the reciprocator, whose communal closeness to the public fits enclavism. In Muir's work, the professional and enforcer styles come together in one dimension, and the reciprocator and avoider styles in another, reminding us of the "positive" and "negative" diagonals in GGCT. The positive diagonal connects individualism and hierarchy, the negative diagonal connects enclavism and atomism, which among many differences share a positive, respectively negative, approach to the exercise of power (Thompson 1982; Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990).

In Table 2, we connect the literature on policing cultures to GGCT. Even if the debate on police culture is ongoing (Sklansky 2007; Loftus 2010; Cockcroft 2013), a permanent degree of variation or "hybridity" within and between police organizations is agreed upon. At the same time, especially when it comes to demanding situations, the work of policing is essentially still a matter of dealing efficiently and authoritatively with danger inherent to police work (Loftus 2010). Moreover, the calls coming in structure police officer's work

Table 2. Cultures in policing.

	Low group (me culture)	High group (we culture)
High grid (roles ascribed)	Atomism in policing You never know what to expect. Stay-out-of-trouble, lay-low-and-don't-make-waves, cover-your-ass Avoider-style	Hierarchy in policing Citizens should obey the law, police will uphold the law. Politicians steer police, management cops steer street cops Enforcer style
Low grid (roles achieved)	Individualism in policing Individual officers effectively deal with problems "in situ" and with discretion; police officers are competent problem-solving professionals Professional style	Enclavism in policing In organization: police officers should stick together and help each other. Beyond organization: police and public should be one (community policing) Reciprocator style

more than anything else. Indeed, competent police officers might be pragmatic improvisers, as Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2012) have suggested for street-level workers in general. This might mean that, in response to concrete situations, they might stepdance from one position to another.

A cultural understanding of frontline policing

Our study of cultural tensions in policing and the way the police organization deals with those tensions consists of two parts, both using the typology presented in Table 2 as a frame of reference. We first examine the way the Dutch police force has incorporated changes in its position in wider Dutch society. To do this, we look at two reports (Police in Transition, 1977; Police in Development, 2005) that instigated trends in policing in the Netherlands and a recent policy document that outlines the way police officers are supposed to put the values formulated in policy documents into practice. In general, the Dutch police can be said to have developed a self-image that highlights more of the low-grid (enclave and individualistic) beliefs and values that fit its changing relation to society, which, according to De Swaan (1982), gradually exchanged vertical command relations for horizontal exchange relations, a process that Van Gunsteren and Van Reuven (1995) dubbed "de-hierachization". The sum of this is a police that serves a diverse set of beliefs and values simultaneously, which is illustrated by a recent policy document that explicitly describes policing in terms of balancing different values.

The Dutch police and cultural change

After the Second World War, the Dutch police had to be rebuilt (Fijnaut 2007). In the decades after the war, various changes took place, but society was changing at a pace more rapid than the police organization. Increasingly, the organization saw itself confronted with issues that asked for a more professional institution, for example, mass demonstrations, riots and more "serious" crime. In short, the order maintenance and law enforcement functions of the police were under pressure. In addition, the police were increasingly expected to move beyond their legal mandate and engage the citizenry in order to keep or in some cases regain their societal credibility (Fijnaut 2007, 863–864).

A milestone in this latter development has been a report that was published in the second half of the 1970s: *Police in Transition* ("*Politie in Verandering*", 1977). The report paved the way for a "strongly 'social' and democratic police geared to small, decentralised units that were closely involved in society, that practised problem solving and that cooperated with other agencies" (Punch 2006, 91). This thinking was in line with popular left-wing and radical political ideas at the time. After confrontations with the public in the 1960s, the police were asked to redefine their values and in particular their (self)-definition as a legalistic, and rather hierarchical organization.

Community policing was one of the clearest organizational developments in which this thinking materialized. To be sure, community policing is in theme that has been discussed extensively in policing studies and that has in practice taken different shapes in different contexts (e.g. Goldstein 1987). Or, as Cordner (1995, 1) put it, it remains many things to many people. In the Netherlands, community policing meant that the police were supposed to be rooted locally and to embrace the value of serving the citizens. This became a central paradigm of policing in the Netherlands, Terpstra (2010) observes. The 1980s' slogan "the police officer is your best friend" typifies the kind of organization the police management had in mind: an organization less geared at a predominant enforcer style.

Although it has evolved over time, (Van der Vijver and Zoomer 2004; Terpstra 2010), in Dutch policing practice, it involves police officers attempting to get to know the people in the neighbourhoods and be known by them ("kennen en gekend worden"), focusing on a broad range of problems in the neighbourhood in a more preventive fashion and aiming to involve residents and also cooperating intensively with other agencies.

In the 1990s, the Dutch police implemented a major reorganization and had to deal with various scandals. During the second half of the 1990s, a debate surrounding the core tasks of the police organization and accountability issues emerged (see, e.g. Muller 2002). In 2005, a new report with the title *Police in Development* ("Politie in Ontwikkeling") was published, in which a new strategy was offered and new societal developments were thought through from the perspective of a networked, information-driven police organization.[2]

Through time, one can see the Dutch police organization – in reaction to societal demands – moving from a relatively legalistic and at time even authoritarian organization that primarily enforced the law towards a lower grid institution that intended to be more service-minded and community-oriented (keeping in mind that local cultures might contrast to broad tendencies and individual styles even more so, Muir 1977). In addition, New Public Management (NPM) values have also influenced the way Dutch policing has functioned – according to Terpstra (2002; compare Needham 2009) in an individualistic direction, consonant with the neo-liberal NPM philosophy which incited policemen to reinvent themselves as problem-solving professionals catering for internal and external clients (see, also, van Sluis, Cachet, and Ringeling 2008).

All in all, the demands seem to have both increased and diversified. That is to say, the police is expected to be able to effectively and efficiently maintain order, enforce the law, help those in need and do so in an increasingly complex society. As a result, the Dutch police organization has to serve a broad range of values and take into account various views of society and its own role in it. Policy-makers in the Dutch police organization are well aware of the multiple values policemen are expected to honour. The best example of this we found in the 2007 code for professional police conduct. In this code, the police organization offers a set of seven core values to its employees: respect, transparency, responsibility, commitment, trustworthiness, justice and balance. These values are supposed to guide officers in the street. Interestingly, the writers of the code mention balance as a seventh and ultimate value. With this, they argue that in every situation, police officers should balance all values at stake. This, to us, is asking officers to culturally "dance", in the sense mentioned above. What we want to know more about is how this works in practice. With the image of cultural shifting in mind, individual officers and teams working at street-level would move from one value and view to the next, balancing them in order to serve them all.

Dancing to the beat: embedded cases in policing

Within the broader framework of Dutch policing, we will now look at three embedded cases (cf. Yin 2003). Embedded Case 1 is a micro-case of police action involving four people. The case narrative, as told by the main character, was recorded on tape during an interactive session in which a group of police officers and two researchers participated (van Hoorn and van Hulst 2012). The question posed to police officers was to describe in detail with citizens in which they had to deal with a surprise, that is, a development in a situation that altered the nature of the situation and clashed with their expectations. Case study 2 was embedded in an ethnographic field study in a Dutch police district (van

Hulst 2013a, 2013b). During the field study, which took place between July 2010 and June 2012, a conflict took place in which a citizen, two patrol officers and three senior police officers were involved. The salience of this case grew after the conflict was reported on in a regional newspaper. The basis for this case is four interviews with the officers involved in it. They gave a detailed narrative of their experiences. Case study 3 is a case of Facebook-induced riots that took place in the town of Haren, in the north of the Netherlands in September 2012. The basis for this case is the reports on the case, for which over 100 interviews were conducted and a broad variety of texts (newspaper articles, policy documents, posts on social media) were researched.[3]

We have selected embedded cases using the following criteria. First, they had to enable us to look closely at police interactions with citizens in situations in which values served would differ and diverge. Second, to understand the way cases are dealt with under sudden pressure, the selected cases needed to have a relatively short time frame; consequently, the embedded cases would supplement the literature on longer term cultural shifts in (police) organizations reviewed in earlier sections (e.g. Thacher and Rein 2004; Glaser and Denhardt 2010). Using multiple cases also allowed for variation. We compiled a set of three cases that differed in organizational scope. Case 1 is small and only a handful of actors participated in it. The scope of the second case is wider. Not only more actors are involved, these actors are also drawn from various ranks within the organization and various actors on "the outside". The third case involves all ranks and various specialisms within the police organization next to a diverse group of stakeholders and partners. We coded the data for the three cases using the concepts outlined in our theory section. For the third case, we used a summary of the reports; for the first two cases, we used the original data. We discussed and integrated our individual reading of the data, revising and reshaping our interpretation several times. We then invited other researchers to read the cases with our interpretation and offer their critique, which led to further, final adjustments.

Embedded Case 1: the fight that turns into a relief action

The Hague is the fourth biggest city in the Netherlands. During a regular shift, police officer Patrick and his colleague drive to a call concerning noise nuisance in what is known as a working-class quarter. When they arrive at the apartment that is complained about, a man opens the door and invites Patrick in. Patrick's colleague remains outside. The man is clearly under the influence of some substance. Sitting together on the couch in the living room, the man tells Patrick about the problematic relationship with his girlfriend.

The conversation is a good one, up until the moment his girlfriend comes home. After closing the front door, which isolates Patrick from his colleague waiting outside, she addresses her boyfriend in a rather "hysterical" manner, as Patrick perceived it. The man then becomes extremely angry and violent. He pulls a knife from between the pillows on the couch and threatens to cut Patrick with it. Patrick realizes he has to choose between using his pepper-spray and his gun. He quickly chooses the pepper-spray. In the minutes that follow, he has the feeling he is "fighting for his life". His colleague is able to enter the house as well. Before Patrick and his colleague overpowered him, the man cuts his own wrists with the knife. When in control, Patrick switches to his role as relief worker, helping his wounded aggressor.

A week later, the officer, Patrick, visits the man. Patrick explains that the situation could also have also been resolved differently. The relationship with the man is restored through the conversation.

Dancing to the police beat: reflection

The kind of work that police officers are involved in includes activities which range from arresting people to helping people who are injured and everything in between. Some calls include various decisions and follow-up action activities in a sequential order and with other calls, officers have to choose which concern should prevail.

Here, the officer and the citizen first talk as equal men, from one guy to another (low-grid, individualist type). Then the situation turns into a fight, in which the police officer, acting from a more hierarchical relationship (high grid, positional type), submits the citizen to its force. Just before, the officer had passed a capricious moment of high uncertainty and seclusion (high grid, isolate type). Finally, the officer switches back to the values and norms that belong to relief work, providing aid and comfort (low grid, more enclavist) – in this case, fairly Samaritan, considering that Patrick had just fought for his life with the subject of his care.

The kind of switching needed in this case and similar ones to some extent resemble the movements that Hood (1998) refers to as cultural "step-dancing". The movements that are needed in this street-level dance, however, seem swifter, more improvisational and responsive to the changing music than the ones suggested by Hood's metaphor of step-dancing, which addresses public managers who deal with organizational change (by definition more incremental and supra-individual). Individual "tap-dancing" of a pragmatic improviser then might better characterize the kind of movement that we see in this embedded case.

Embedded Case 2: a fine that is never cashed

On a highway in the middle of the Netherlands, a traffic accident takes place. Experienced police officer William arrives at the scene after his colleagues, when the situation is already under control. On the other side of the road, a car stops and the driver crosses his side of the road and the crash barrier. It turns out to be a press photographer. Officer William stops the man and gives him a fine for crossing the highway. Not too much later, a second car stops and another man crosses the road. This time it is a medical doctor. The doctor also gets a fine and is ordered to get back to his car without crossing the road for a second time, which puts him in a very difficult position.

When William returns to the police station, his ranking officers summon him. The doctor had called the office – in tears – to complain. A national newspaper also calls to the communications office of the police district. His superiors have a penetrating talk with William about redrawing the fine for the doctor. They argue that the image of the police – which all police officers should guard – is damaged if the fine is not redrawn. Although he is totally convinced that he has the discretion to act the way he did and even though he feels betrayed, William redraws the fine. The next day, a critical article and also pictures of the officer appear in a national newspaper. The doctor is quoted, saying he is still trembling with "anger and disbelief". In online reactions to the article by newspaper readers, the police officer is also criticized. The fine, the article states, has been redrawn.

Dancing to the police beat: reflection

This is a classical conflict between citizens and police, and between superiors and rank and file. Most notably, hierarchy defines the relationships between various actors involved; it manifests itself in the fine that the patrol officer directly gives to the citizen who does

not obey the law (strictly enforcer style), and in the arguments that his superiors use (high-group culture that cannot be tainted) to persuade the patrol officer to cancel the ticket.

Interestingly, the officer in this case utilizes his individual discretion (professional style), to legitimize a course of action which at face value is strictly hierarchical (enforcer style) vis-à-vis the citizen. What we see here is the classic "doughnut"-structure of street-level discretion: individual room for manoeuver, within hierarchically defined borders (Lipsky 1980). This officer professionally decides to stick to the legal order in this situation. The level of discretion for Dutch police officers is usually substantial, and typically, actions on the ground remain unquestioned – also because all officers work within the same doughnut-structure, which incites a high-group solidarity with "the average officer like any other policeman", all together in this entity called the police.

Citizens, however, may define solidarity in a different way, like the medical doctor in this case. He approached the scene as a fellow relief agent, breaking some rules and cutting some corners for the greater good of collaborative relief work – not expecting to be dismissed in a strictly hierarchical way (this is my call, and that is your position: in your car, on the other side of the road). It happens more often that citizens demand to be treated with due respect, as equals in a shared situation that in their mind fits a low-grid, non-hierarchical take. And in some situations, police officers actually display professional or reciprocator styles of operating. The patrol officer in this embedded case, however, failed to tap into the wider cultural repertoire available to him. He did not improvise pragmatically, but used his discretion conservatively (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2012). The senior officers in this case displayed more cultural flexibility. Aspiring to prevent media damage, they set out to undo the externally hierarchical actions of their colleague, using an internally hierarchical approach to make him redraw the fine. This indirectly meant acknowledging the doctor's appeal to high-group solidarity (relief givers united), ignoring a similar, but more restricted claim made by police officers (policemen united).

Embedded Case 3: a party that turns into riots

On 6 September 2012, 15-year-old Merthe creates a Facebook-event for her 16th birthday on 21 September. She lives with her parents in Haren, a quiet, posh town in the North of the Netherlands. Within one day, 3500 Facebook members have signed up for the party and in total 16,000 people have been invited. Others on Facebook create special party-pages and Merthe has no control over "her" party any more. In the course of the week leading up to Merthe's birthday, various newspapers, radio stations and television programmes make reports about the upcoming party.

In the days before the party, the mayor – head of local order maintenance – publicly announces "there will be no party". At the same time, many residents and entrepreneurs call the local bureaucracy for information, guidelines or advice. Some propose an alternative party, but the authorities turn this offer down. All the while the local bureaucracy and the police do not develop a clear, agreed-upon communication strategy. Afterwards, journalists and residents alike characterized the communication as unclear, contradictory and hesitant.

On the day of the party itself, nobody really seems to know what to expect. The mayor decides to install another organizational structure in order to handle what now seemed to be a crisis. At the end of the afternoon, many young people have gathered in the centre (a rough estimate of the total amount of people who visited Haren is between 3000 and 5000). A large portion of those people hang around the roadblock where the mass media had "set up their tent". Even though drinking alcohol in the streets had been prohibited (the official rule was that one could carry around alcoholic beverages but not drink

them), many of them are drinking the alcoholic beverages they either brought from home or bought in one of the local supermarkets.

Early in the evening, the roads became congested and with every arriving train, large groups of young people entered Haren. Between 19:30 and 20 hrs, the crowd became more merry and also rowdy, but the police officers reported to their supervisors that they did not experience pressure. Many young people had been drinking for several hours by then and the atmosphere had gradually become tenser. The police officers, who at the beginning of the evening had mingled among the visitors to keep the order, now grouped at the other side of the fences in place. A small group of riot-police officers is called to the scene and others are ordered to come to Haren from elsewhere.

At the moment the riot police arrives, escalation takes place. Youngsters start throwing all kinds of things at police officers. The riot police does her work, but there are not enough officers to deal with the rioting youngsters there and then. Between 21:00 hrs on Friday and 0:30 hrs the next morning, the riot police and young men fight in the streets of Haren, leaving a trail of broken glass and demolitions. The total costs of the party are estimated at one million euros.

Dancing to the beat: reflection

In this case, the authorities – mayor and police – at first take a strictly hierarchical position towards citizens: "*Ordnung muss sein*", and order will be maintained in the way they define it. Even when representatives of civil society offer to work together, and channel the growing Dionysian energy in other festive ways, the authorities remain firm: "There will be no party". When citizens, mainly youngsters, turn up in large numbers, however, the authorities tolerate their law-challenging, anti-authoritarian behaviour – conspicuously low-grid – until it is too late. Not moving (relaxing the hierarchical position) when they could at the beginning, not staying put (acting authoritatively) when they should have later on, the local authorities communicate confusing signals, losing credibility rapidly and creating an impossible task for themselves (Morrell and Currie 2015).

In fact, Haren witnessed a public authority that did not use, or had not developed, the culturally versatile repertoire needed for the events – and publics – it was facing. Again, the tap-dancing metaphor might work to illustrate what was needed here. In a turbulent situation like this, the authorities need to move fast, improvise and respond convincingly to the "music" that others initiate. The ultimate sequence of moves cannot be planned exactly, but a diverse repertoire of actions can be maintained for later improvisation, responding to other parties involved.

Lack of information and surprising developments are regular aspects of policing (also in embedded Cases 1 and 2). But when officers have to deal with unknown challenges (unlike Case 2), and equally possible scripts have major organizational implications (unlike Case 1), the heat is truly on. In these circumstances, police authorities could use different administrative scenarios that help to make sense of the developing situation and help to decide when to switch from one style of operating to another. In Haren, however, the police authorities were clearly not able to shift cultural balance in effective, appropriate ways.

Conclusion: calls for cultural versatility

In this paper, we posed two research questions: what sets of values, beliefs and practices (cultures) has the police organization developed to deal with high expectations of their publics? How do cultural tensions play out in demanding real-life practices of policing?

GGCT has helped us to understand prevalent cultural tensions in policing, as well as the way in which the police and its officers attempt to deal with those tensions in practice, tapping into different cultural repertoires available to them. It has helped us to move beyond the idea of the police as an organization with only one or two strong (sub-) culture(s) (Foster 2003; Cockcroft 2013). Policing, we have argued, is not a task that can be pigeon-holed in singular quadrants of a cultural typology (see Tables 1 and 2). It is, rather, prone to cultural pluriformity, or coexistence, not just within the larger organization, but also at the street-level of "in situ" operations. Although one could see the prominence at particular moments in time of a certain cultural bias at the level of organizational rhetoric, this does not mean that the organization is simply cycling (Thacher and Rein 2004) from one set of values, beliefs and practices to another set. Contrary to the rhetoric, which often suggests that "new" repertoires are replacing "old" ones, the practice of policing tends to be one of stacking of layer-on-layer sedimentation. Trends and fashions like community policing and NPM presented not so much a wholesale shift, but rather an enlargement of the cultural repertoires from which officers could choose.

The embedded cases offered further evidence on the ways in which cultural tensions can play out in urgent situations, in which the policing tasks might seem almost impossible (Morrell and Currie 2015). In the first embedded case that we described, one police officer, in the course of one action, in very short time span, "danced" through the entire grid-group typology presented in Table 2. Urgent situations like these, which police officers everywhere can encounter any day, make it hard to choose one set of values and related practices, "fire-walling" others (Thacher and Rein 2004). Connecting and adding to Hood's (1998) conceptual metaphor of "step-dancing" – signifying more incremental cultural shifting in public management and organization – we used the image of "tap-dancing" to highlight the swift, flexible and improvisational shifting between repertoires that can be found in street-level administration of this type (cf. Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2012). We prefer this metaphor over Feldman and Rafaeli's (2002) alternative, ballroom dancing. Even though it nicely brings out the inherent relational nature of coordinated action, ballroom dancing is ultimately too much pre-scripted to aptly capture the nature of cultural shifting that goes on in situations illustrated by embedded Case 1.

Embedded cases 2 and 3 highlighted that shifting between competing styles of thought and action – though repeatedly needed – is far from easy and cannot be taken for granted. Here, an individual officer (Case 2) and a police organization (Case 3) did not fully use the diversified cultural repertoire available to them, and were overruled (Case 2) and reality-checked (Case 3) by external forces demanding more versatility. We could say that in Case 1, the police officer was forced to switch on the spot, in Case 2 on the rebound, while in Case 3, cultural versatility was as necessary as it was lacking. In the administrative frontline of policing, showing versatility requires that cultural repertoires are not only diversified, but that policemen also prove to be able to shift between them as quickly and responsive as the challenge requires. That the same applies to professionals working in hospitals, schools and other organizations in the frontline of public service can be expected, but not claimed within the confines of this paper.

In this paper, we investigated the sets of values, beliefs and practices (cultures) that can be encountered in policing, homing in on concrete manifestations. Importantly, our choice for the particular Dutch setting and a typical kind of moment – when the proverbial "heat is on" – limit our study. Nevertheless, this was needed to show how cultural tensions play out in real-life practices, which are time- and space-specific. Ultimately, a critic might challenge our proposition that we are actually dealing with police *culture* here. Is this not simply, individual and group, *behaviour*? Did we really need a cultural perspective to

shed light on this? Although we recognize a behavioural element, we also stress that there are clear cultural patterns in dealing with the challenges of police work. We detected them in policing in general and the Dutch police at large, as well as in the embedded cases we analysed. Police officers like Patrick (Case 1) and William (Case 2) tapped into cultural repertoires, connected to institutional contexts, not only available to them but to all similar actors. Through their actions and reactions, they expressed and extended cultural patterns, in William's case of one particular type, and in Patrick's case of more than one type. Referring to Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990), we could say that they "shaped the maze while running it", which is what frontline officers generally do. They are profoundly influenced by institutions, which they cannot easily unmake or ignore, but which are, through their actions and interpretations, operationalized, sustained, and to some extent also reconfigured. In this way, cultural patterns are institutionalized; they are reproduced in a fundamentally non-genetic, and deeply cultural way.

The present study thus contributes to discussions on GGCT, police culture and frontline administration in our discipline. It could be extended in various directions. Not only would a study of cultural variation in other countries be helpful to better understand the way repertoires are used, one could also look at other frontline organizations like hospitals and schools. Although the demands and the situations these organizations and professionals in them are confronted with are of a different nature, what unites them is the constant and often pressing need to deal with diversely high expectations.

Acknowledgments

The authors like to thank Brendon Swedlow, Perri 6, Kim Loyens and an anonymus reviewer for comments on earlier versions.

Notes

1. For reasons that will clarified in this paper, we prefer to use the (Douglasian) terms enclavism and atomism to the terms egalitarianism and fatalism, which are also used to cover the respective cultural patterns.
2. Recently, a second major reorganization took place: the development of one national police. The cases in our paper all took place before this change materialized.
3. These reports can be downloaded at: http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/rapporten/2013/03/08/twee-werelden-hoofdrapport-commissie-project-x-haren.html

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